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SOUVENIR

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DEDICATION

India has been a land of musician-saints and poet-philosophers from time immemorial. One of such great saints is Shri Purandaradasa of Karnataka. He was born in Purandaragad, now in Maharashtra, in the year 1480, in the heydays of Vijayanagara Empire, in a very rich jewellery-family. His father was Varadappa Naik, known for his wealth as well as generosity. His son Srinivasa Naik or Seenappa Naik surpassed his father in wealth and came to be known as Navakoti Narayana. But he was a great miser. His wife Saraswati was a generous woman of piety and devotion. An incident attributed to his wife's generosity changed the outlook of Seenappa Naik and made him renounce all his fabulous wealth and worldly possessions. He, with his wife, four sons and his trusted servant became a God's minstrel composing and singing songs in praise of Lord Vithala of Pandharpur, also now in Maharashtra. He was initiated into the 'Dasa' order by Shri Vyasaraya Swami of Hampi, the Capital of Vijayanagara Empire.

All his compositions (attributed to him as 4,75,000 songs) are in simple Kannada, the language of the masses and contain the essence of Vedas and Upanishads, rich with stories from Mahabharata, Ramayana and Bhagavata. In his wanderings across the country, he visited all the important pilgrim centres of South like Thirupathi, Kumbhakonam, and Udipi. Though a follower of Dwaita school of philosophy, his songs breathe a catholicity of outlook, toleration and compassion. In one of his songs he says 'man's life is the greatest gift of God, don't waste it', in another he says 'don't run away from the world, live in it and conquer it'. In another entitled 'Victory to Dharma' he has preached the essence of non-violence. He condemned show and pomp of worship without devotion as a fraud, condemned caste, untouchability and preached tolerance among different religions. Kanakadasa, a shepherd was his contemporary.

He was not only a great poet, saint and philosopher, learned in Vedas, Upanishads and Epics, but also a great musician. He is hailed as the Father of Karnataka music. Ramamatya, Kshetragna, Tyagaraja,

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and Dikshitar have paid glowing tributes to his mastery over music and acknowledged their indebtedness to him. He systematised Karnataka music and gave it Raga Mayamalava Gowla which Ramamatya says as the best of Rages (Raganam uthamothamh). He prescribed scales and formed graded series of lessons which even today prevail in the teaching music. His 'swaravalis', 'junti versais', 'alankaras' and 'geetas' form the surest road to the mastery of Karnataka music. His keertanas paved the way to the kritis of Tyagaraja, Dikshitar and Shyamasastri, who improved and perfected them. His 'suladis' and 'ugabhogas' are unique compositions in Kannada literature.

Purandaradas's Keertanas came to be known as Purandaropanishad and Vyasaraya acclaimed him as Dasa among Dasas (Dasarendare Purandara Dasarayya). Mudikondam Venkatarama Iyer calls him 'Sangita Pitamaha'. He lived upto the ripe old age of 84 years and died in 1564. Though 400 years have rolled by millions even today sing and dance his simple, pure, mellifluous tunes in praise of the Lord. Purandaradasa elevated and spiritualised the lives of the people.

✦"The personality, of Purandaradasa is the greatest that a combination of spirituality art and culture has produced.....He is a mighty personality the like of whom it takes the world a millineum to produce."

This little Souvenir is dedicated to the memory of the great saint. We are grateful to the scholars who have responded to our request and given us their illuminating articles on different aspects of Purandaradasa's life and music. We are also grateful to the businesshouses who have helped us by giving their advertisements to pay this humble homage.

S.V. Krishnamoorthy Rao
President,
Shri Purandaradasa Fourth
Centenary Celebrations
Committee.

New Delhi, 14.2.1964.

✦Quarterly journal of Madras Music Academy, 1942 Vol. XIII. parts i-iv.

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SHRI PURANDARADASA AND THE UNIVERSALITY OF HIS TEACHING

Dr. R. R. Diwakar

"Come what may, but let the Lord's mercy be on me"
'Neither fear nor favour of the whole world can effect
the devotee whose heart is fixed in the Lord'.
'Endless is anxiety and worry till my
mind rests in the Lord'.
'See the Lord with the inner eye,
the Lord of the three worlds'.
'Depend not on the fleeting fortune of the day;
the Lord's feet alone are Eternal.
Blessed am I, having seen the Lord with my own eyes".

Thus burst forth in thousands of melodious songs, the wandering minstrel Purandaradasa of Karnataka, speaking the universal language of man aspiring to attain the feet of God. He lived and wrote and sang as far back as the sixteenth century (1480 to 1564). And yet his songs retain the freshness of the Indian nightingale (bulbul) at dawn, his language has the familiarity of our daily talk, and his teachings have the homeliness of intimate whispers.

The name 'Purandaropanishad' given to his works is a fitting tribute to all the great qualities which his songs have in abundance. He is said to have composed about 4,75,000 songs. This figure might well be a result of what Max Muller has called a 'dialogic process', which operates in such cases. Only a thousand and odd, however, are available today. It is obvious that the popular image of this great singer is that of one who renounced everything for the love of God and hence every

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word he spoke was a song and every song he sang was a sacred Mantra, which led him nearer and nearer to God. And at last he could testify to the Eternal Presence. 'Blessed am I, having seen the Lord with my own eyes'.

Strangely enough the quality of universality arises out of the depth of individuality. We should not be led away by the word 'universal'. Any experience or appeal has to be human and therefore intensely and genuinely individual in the first instance. The expression of such an experience in terms which go home to the heart of humanity, irrespective of differences in land or climate, language or religion, sex or class, is really what invests the experience with the quality of universality. Some experiences of man or human beings all over the world are basic and common to Homo Sapiens Common is the origin of man, common is his course of evolution and so is his destiny too. Therefore, such basic experiences thrill every heart, more every mind, and touch every human being when expressed in a way which appeals to all.

Not every one however, has the power of proper and felicitous expression. It is a rare gift. While the capacity to appreciate what is appealing to all is almost universal, the power to express the same is found to be very rare indeed. In India, we had had in almost every important language minstrels of the type of Purandaradasa who spoke to the heart of the masses in a lauguage which went home and elevated them.

The mos recent instance in India of a great genius who spoke a universal language was Dr. Tagore. It is true that he had far more and greater talents than that of a singer and a minstrel. But his talents as a composer and singer of devotional songs were a-piece with those of Kabir and Tulsi, of Mira and Narsi, of Tukaram and Vemana, of Avvai and Kanaka. He was a Bengali born and bread up in the Neo-Hindu tradition of Brahmoism, of Upanishadic teaching and of deep devotion. His appeal like the appeal of the saints and singers of that class mentioned above is not restricted to one language or caste or creed or clime. Whichever the deity of their devotion, what ever the language of their song their appeal is universl and moves man all over.

The best of the songs of Purandaradasa belong to that class of poetry. It is the very emotion of pure and selfless love flowing and

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floating to the feet of God more than mere poetry or song. It is the spiritual experience of a seeking, human soul yearning to meet the Lord more than the emotion of love—and that is 'the universal' in essence. The soul set out on this kind of constant research transcends all individual existence and links itself up with the Infinite in the finite, the Eternal in the transient. Infinite are the variations of this theme and each singer has a fresh and original tune to play. It is thus that the symphony goes on and the human mind finds consolation, and peace in it, whenever it seeks guidance and relief from the day today life struggle and frustration, trouble and turmoil.

Purandaradasa however, was more than a poet and far more than a singer. He was the first great composer of what is called Karnataka or South Indian School of music in India. This schoal of music has the enviable tradition of jealously guarding the purity of what is essentially 'Indian music' without the admixture of what could be called extra-Indian influences. In that line his name is one to conjure with. No one of note in Karnataka music begins but by paying a tribute to him. Tyagaraja an Andhra who was one of the greatest modern composers of Karnataka music mentions him as one who influenced his early compositions profoundly.

There is another great and significant trait about Purandaradasa. It is well-known that the masses in India as elsewhere in the middle and earlier ages were generally innocent of the classical language which was Sanskrit. And all the treasure of religion, of philosophy, of ethics, of spiritual teaching lay locked up in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Geetha, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and so on. This is the richest heritage that any people in the world can boast of. It is not merely ancient and as old as about three thousand years-especially the Vedas and the Upanishads, but it is profound and comprehensive. The truths are true to experience and Aldous Huxley rightly calls them 'perennial philosophy'.

Purandaradasa belonged to that fraternity of Dasas, the Servants of God, who mercilessly plundered the Sanskrit treasures of thought, emotion, and spiritual knowledge which were locked up for ages and invited the masses to the richest feast ever served in Kannada and Karnataka.

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It is said that traditionally there have been two classes of teachers of the Vaishnava doctrine and devotion, namely the Vyasa-Koota and the Dasa-Koota. The former is the class which taught through the medium of Sanskrit and was naturally restricted to those who could understand that great language, the language of gods. The latter is the class who taught in Kannada, the language of the masses. While Sanskrit was like the Ganges available to a few living near about the banks, Kannada was like the numerous canals which took the sacred waters to the fields and homes of the farthest and the poorest.

Kannada is as old as the Christian era. Long before Purandaradasa, many are the poets and writers who fashioned the language into an easy instrument of mass communication. Especially in the eleventh century and onwards, we find numerous Shiva Sharanas dedicated to Shiva, bursting forth in Kannada aphorisms the Upanishadic and Agamic truths and deep human experiences. About thirty of them were women. Most prominent and recognised as the foremost among them was Allama Prabhu. He was the President of the Anubhava Mantapa, the Hall of Realisation, organised by Basava, the inspirer of all who assembled in Kalyan.

Purandaradasa was the disciple of Shri Vyasaraya, a great name in Sanskrit scholarship and Dwaita Vedant in those times. He had influence over the contemporary rulers in the Vijayanagara Empire. Purandaradasa is designated as 'Guru Purandara' by the whole of Dasa brotherhood. He is easily the most prominent among them. The tradition of the Dasas is a continuous and living one. No one yet born has been able to rise above him either in composition, in teaching, or in melody or lucidity and homely language.

He lived to the ripe age of 84, and his life was an eventful one. He was a jeweller and known as a miser. But a certain incident in his life converted his love of gold in to love of God. To certain extent his somewhat generous wife was instrumental in this interval spiritual change of otherwise greedy Brahmin. For once the course of his life was changed and he became a devotee of the Vithal deity of Pandharpur. He was initiated by Shri Vyasaraya. He adopted the pen-name 'Purandara Vithala' and composed, wrote and sang in Kannada numerous songs which are called Keerthanas. The theme is life and its truths

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and the aspiration to rise to the feet of God Supreme. This is a universal theme. The intensity of Purandaradasa's yearning, his depth of devotion and his constant Sadhana led him to progressive spiritual realisation. His mastery of musical science, his dedication to a life of teaching and preaching to the masses, his identification with their joys and sorrows made him sing in a language which could be understood by all.

That is Purandaradasa—that is how he could sing, "Blessed am I, having seen the Lord with my own eyes". That is how he could lead millions to the gates of Heaven—by words at once simple and charming, by music which is enchanting and by divine inspiration which is universally elevating.

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SHRI PURANDARADASA A MASTER OF WORDS AND MUSIC

Smt. Rukmini Devi Arundale

A rare event of great importance to musicians, philosophers and devotees is the 400th anniversary of the death of Shri Purandaradasa which falls on the 14th of January 1964. It is indeed surprising that 400 years have elapsed since the great Saint-musician passed away and yet his music and the musical tradition that he was heir to and which he passed on enriched by his contribution are vibrant with life, neither old nor modern but obviously eternal, appealing to the heart of man. The life story of Purandaradasa is known to all. It is the eternal story of all who attain illumination in one dazzling moment while it must take many lives to attain to that moment. Lord Buddha searched for Truth everywhere and looked for the meaning of sorrow and its solution but suddenly under the Bodhi Tree—the answer came to him—Truth always comes in a moment; but man takes centuries to deserve that or to be ready for it

Purandaradasa was grateful to his wife for the great lesson of detachment to earthly things which he learnt from her. When he realised by the presence of the Lord in the form of the begger, that he, Purandaradasa, was a miser, his soul underwent a complete revolution and he fell at the feet of his wife. But long before this he must have been a musician of great talent, long before, he must have been a devotee of merit and just as a lamp is ready prepared for the spark that makes it leap into a flame, he was ready. India has been always a land of saints who have instilled into the hearts of our people, true devotion. Many of our saints such as Mirabai, Kabir, Surdas, Thyagaraja, the Alwars and Nayanars and others, must have been like Purandaradasa for

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through song alone are our hearts stirred. Purandaradasa was a master of words as well as of music. Even without the music his songs are beautiful poetry. So in his songs, it is as if the poetry of sound or raga is added to the poetry of words. Like all great poets his words are simple, perfect, in harmony and easy to follow even for those who are not scholars in the Kannada language. Besides this his music is also simple, for in simplicity, is the ultimate achievement—not a simplicity of ignorance but of the deepest wisdom. He must have realised how music is the instrument of highest thought and that all need music. So he gave to the world of the child and the learner ways and means of achieving true expression in this art. He therefore was the true teacher for he gave to teachers of music a method of communicating their knowledge to their sishyas in the form of different Swaravalis and Gitams without learning which no teacher or learner can attain perfection in music.

It is said that for Kaliyuga the best means of attaining union with the divine is through Bhakti. As great Avataras of Vishnu come into the world, so do their messengers come to stir the hearts of people to make them realise the truth of a noble life and the reality of the Higher life. In India there is no difference between what Shri Krishna taught in the Gita or what the upanishads conveyed and the true music of messengers of beauty like Purandaradasa. Only, through such music, we are nearer to the teachings of Shri Krishna for we comprehend more truly with the mind of the heart than the mind alone. We need today such wisdom and such music.

I believe that Purandaradasa will never be old and perhaps because of this centenary, he will be born again through his music. Of course, it is not easy to say that the melody of his songs as sung now was set by him, but a tradition has been built up by which we can feel the Purandaradasa style and there is no doubt that this tradition does convey his quality and spirit. He composed hundreds of thousands of songs. Many must be lost but there are enough to learn and to teach. This occasion must mark the beginning of a new Era of music in our country driving away the worldly, the sensual and the unreal which are so fast entering into our lives. May Purandaradasa's music once again lift us all to feet of the Lord in Whom he found refuge !

———

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THE POETIC QUALITY OF PURANDARADASA'S SONGS

Dr. R. S. Mugali

Purandaradasa was a great devotee and poet-singer of Karnataka. He lived in the 16th century in the hey-day of the Vijayanagara Empire. He is credited with having composed an immensely large number of devotional songs in Kannada. Those extant today are, however, a little more than one thousand.

It is the purpose of this article to assess in brief the poetic quality of his songs and indicate their singular charm and excellence with extracts wherever necessary.

At the outset, it must be remembered that Purandaradasa was a devotee in the Madhwa tradition. He was a disciple of the great Vyasaraya, who was an eminent scholar and saint in the pontifical order, initiated by Madhwacharya, the founder of the Dwaita school of thought. Purandaradasa was a very devout disciple of his Guru and as such he strictly followed the philosophy, code of conduct and method of worship of the Madhwa tradition. Some of his songs clearly reveal this dominant aspect of his personality. There are a few songs which show his over-enthusiasm to propagate the doctrines of Madhwa, in which he had implicit faith. All the same, it is necessary to note that he was not a blind or bigoted follower and he never allowed his orthodoxy to get the better of his humanism. In fact, it may be generally remarked that a true devotee or saint is first and foremost a liberal humanist, whatever may be his affiliations or attachments. Purandaradasa is no exception to this rule. He has severely criticised religious hypocrisy, bigotry and casteism.

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The songs of Purandaradasa can be classified according to theme into four categories viz., (1) those that are evocatory and full of praise of God and Guru (2) those that reveal the inner personality and the mystical experiences of the saint (3) those that describe with zest and symbolic significance the leelas of Krishna and lastly (4) those that are critical of contemporary society, and are didactic. The diversity of the theme and the simplicity and spontaneity of expression of all these songs along with their musical quality are striking at the very first glance. When these songs are rendered musically they make a very direct appeal and evoke feelings of devotion in the hearts of all earnest seekers. Naturally the impression is created that everyone of these songs is a literary gem and that its poetic quality is unquestioned and superb. Thus devotional values are sometimes confused with literary values. When this happens, there is evident an axaggerated valuation of the poetry of Purandaradasa, giving rise to contrary reaction on the part of discriminating critics.

The first pre-requisite of literary criticism is to judge the poetic quality of a creative work, irrespective of the greatness of the personality of the author or of its religious and spiritual value. But in judging so, the impact of a towering personality on such work, particularly when it is of a lyrical character, cannot be ignored. When we study the songs of Purandaradasa from the literary stand-point, we find that a number of songs have greater value as devotional than as literary pieces. There is then another set of songs, which have a genuine poetic quality, but do not sustain it. There are, of course, some songs, which are entirely poetic in matter and manner. At least a few of them reach the heights of great poetry. In all these songs, the personality of an ardent devotee and of a keen observer of life and moral preacher is perceptible. That is the unifying factor of the varied themes of these songs. That is the magic which invests every song with charm.

Most of the evocatory songs describe the traits of the deity concerned in sweet musical language as for instance 'Yadava ni ba yadukula nandana' and 'Moorutiyanu Nilliso'. But there is a genuine touch of poetry in a few songs of this type. For example, the song in praise of Goddess Laxmi is charming for its spontaneous fancy and picturesque diction. In the very first stanza evoking 'Bhagyada Laxmi', Purandaradasa says, 'Pray do come at the time of pious worship with jingling

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feet, keeping step after step, like butter rising from butter-milk. The simile is as novel as it is spontaneous. In another song, the poet-saint eulogises the infinite mercy of God as He carries loads of grass to the house of a devotee, who offers a mere flower. 'If a devotee offers just one petal of Tulasi with perfect surrender and remembrance, God will for ever live with him. If he worships Him with all sorts of flowers in a complete spirit of dedication, God will grant him half the share in his mansion. He served as a groom for the horses in the household of the Pandavas and yet He is a terror to the tyrant and the arrogant',

It is in songs that reveal the inner personality that Purandaradasa comes out with the poety of the heart and of the spirit. His earnest longing to be always in Divine Presence and the experience of joy, peace and freedom from fear in that presence have been expressed in simple and stirring songs. The poetic quality of such songs lies more in the utter sincerity of experience, feeling-tone and familiar style than in the richness of imagery. For instance, the song 'Na ninnolanya beduvadilla' meaning 'I don't ask for anything else, pray dwell in the lotus of my heart' is an expression of earnest longing, whereas the song 'Badukidenu Badukidenu Bhava Hingitu' meaning 'Now I am saved, Now I live, wordly life is dried up' is the outburst of a freed soul set on the path of realisation. Taken separately, these songs may look like little stars with faint light but when they are viewed together, they give an insight into the sublime splendour of the sky, that is the inner personality of Purandaradasa. The strength of spirit and complete fearlessness which a perfect devotee possesses is expressed by the song 'Na ninna dhyanadoliralu'. It is a great piece by itself, but it becomes greater in the company of other songs of a similar character. We give below a full rendering of this song as done by a renowned Kannada author :

'When I am dwelling in thought of you, what harm can wicked men do to me ? What will they do me being evilly disposed towards me when your eternal one, are looking after me ?All the moments of my life I live in thought of you. Will ants besiege a fire ?

If a horse makes a rush to show off speed, will the dust it raises besiege the sun ? To men who can endure, no harm can come. Will the hill shake from the wind ?

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'If the thief sees a purse in the mirror and makes a hole in the mirror to get it, will it become his? I have placed my trust in you. O Purandara Vittala, save me'.*

Some of the force and beauty is bound to be missing in translation and yet one can see what height of spiritual experience and poetic expression the poet-saint had attained, from a study of such songs.

Among the several songs describing the sport of Krishna, the life and activities of that Avatar of God are mirrored forth under the influence and inspiration of that great devotional work entitled Bhagavata purana. These songs are not purely descriptive but they are replete with spiritual symbolism. A good example of this aspect is to be found in the song 'Pogadirelo Ranga Bagilindachege' wherein little Krishna is advised not to go out of the doorstep as he is likely to be lifted away by Bhagavatas. Though this song apparently reflects the anxiety and fear of a mother, it symbolises the desire of Mother-Force to keep the Supreme Being hidden and inscrutable as well as the longing of sages and devotees to seek and find Him. Purandaradasa, being a mystic in direct communion with God, alone could imagine such a simple and homely symbol.

In the songs, that deal with the social life of the day, the saint-poet has shown his deep understanding of human nature, sense of satirical humour and a painful awareness of the falling moral standards of the people. One of the best in this series is the well-known song entitled 'Udara Vairagyavidu', which deserves to be quoted in full :

'All this is saintliness for the sake of the stomach. There is no jot of devotion to God in it. To rise early and tremble with the cold, and pride onself on bathing in the river; while all the time the inside is full of haughtiness, envy and anger; and thus to leave people who are looking on to admire; to spread images of brass and bell-metal all around, as if it were the shop of a metal-worker; and to light many lamps that they may glitter; and worship God as with flowers of hypocrisy; prayer leads in hand and orison on tongue and cloth worn over the face as a veil, to think of another woman and of another's money and win a name

*Masti Venkatesh Iyengar : Popular culture in Karnatak PP 64.

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for being a great ascetic; to simulate great devotion by outward show and make people say, "There is no equal to him", complete in externals like a man playing a woman's part : All this is work for ensuring a meal. It is stomach-saintliness'*:

There can be no better illustration of scathing satire that even a devotee and mystic was capable of. The song is nearly perfect in the study of hypocritical nature, imagery and diction. The poetic quality of Purandaradasa is heightened by such writing. On the whole, Purandaradasa's personality as a devout servant of God and as a critic of social milieu has found expression in diverse songs, ringing with a sincere poetic verse and rising at times to sublime heights.

*Masti Venkatesh Iyengar : Popular culture in Karnatak—PP 7.

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SHRI PURANDARADASA THE TEACHER OF THE PEOPLE

Shri K. Sampathgiri Rao

Students of Karnataka music are usually put through their first paces with the learning of the Pillari geete of Shri Purandaradasa beginning 'Lambodara lakumikara', an invocation to Lord Ganesa. Preliminary lessons also include his well-known geeta, 'Kereya neeranu kerege chelli ....', which may be rendered thus :

One taking a hardful of water from the lake throws it back into the lake itself, and feels blessed by this act. Likewise render bock to Lord Shri Hari the wealth he bestows on you and live your life :

These are simple words which every child can understand, but they convey the profound truth expressed in the first verse of the Ishopnishad beginning 'Ishavasyamidam sarvam...'. 'All this that we see in this great universe is pervaded by God. Enjoy what He gives you. Do not covet anybody's wealth'. Commenting on this verse, Mahatma Gandhi said on one occasion :

"I have now come to the final conclusion that if all the Upanishads and all, the other scriptures happened all of a sudden to be reduced to ashes, and if only the first verse of the Ishopanishad were left intact in the memory of Hindus, Hinduism would live for ever....What more can a man in the street want to learn than this that the one God and Creator and Master of all that lives pervades the universe ? ...If you think you are one of His numerous creatures, it becomes of you to renounce everything and lay it at His feet.....The moment you carry out these precepts, you become a wise citizen of the world living at peace with all that lives...

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I have in my search of the scriptures of the world found nothing to add to this mantra."

The same thing can be said of these two lines of refrain from the sage mind of Shri Purandaradasa.

The analogy of taking up a handful of water from the lake and throwing it back into the lake itself is a familiar one to those who perform their Sandhya prayers on the banks of rivers and lakes, offering their oblations of water to the Sun-god,the visible symbol of the Lord Himself.

Thus Shri Purandaradasa, the servant of the Lord, the very embodiment of renunciation went about among his fellow-men, with the name of God on his lips, exhorting them to live the good life and teaching them the eternal truths of the Upanishads and sacred scriptures in simple words, using familiar illustrations from their own daily life and experience. He distilled the wisdom of the ancient texts in easy, mellifluous language such as could be understood by the common man. He earned the unstinted praise of his great and profoundly learned teacher, Shri Vyasa Tirtha, the religious preceptor by Shri Krishnadeva Raya in the heyday of the Vijayanagara Empire. Shri Vyasa Tirtha honoured the compositions of Shri Purandaradasa by calling them Purandaropanished—a recognition that caused not a little stir in the circle of erudite pandits who would not easily reconcile themselves to the fact that Shri Purandara dasa sang in Kannada, the language of the common masses, and that what he said take rank with the utterances of the seers of theUpanishadaa. But such had and has always been the trend of cultural movements in this ancient land. Pali was used instead of Sanskrit in the days of Buddha. Later, the Puranas were composed to illustrate by story and legend, the great truths contained in the ancient scriptures, and brought out from holy hermitages and broadcast in village gatherings and market places. And, still later, in mediaeval times the regional languages were used for the same purpose by preachers and saints who arose in every part of India to bring to the doors of the common people the wisdom of the ancient seers in familiar language. It was in this way that the genius of the Hindu people sought to level up the cultural life of all sections of the people, and achieve the ideal of what may be called a socialistic pattern in the spiritual field.

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Shri Purandaradasa was the most outstanding among such popular teachers in South India in the first half of the Sixteenth century. He had renounced his enormous wealth and given up his profession as a dealer in gold and precious stones to become a servant of God. He repaired to Vijayanagara (modern Hampi) with his wife and children and was accepted as a disciple by the venerable Vyasa Tirtha whose Mutt was a kind of University centre there. Rising up early in the morning, Shri Purandaradasa would go to the Tungabhadra river, and after bath and prayers proceed with his band of followers, which included his sons, on his round of the great city singing songs and dancing now and then in ecstasy to their rhythmic measure. He wore the characteristic dress of the Haridasa, consisting of a turban, a rosary of tulasi beads round his neck, sounding cymbals in his hand, while a tambura was slung down from one shoulder, and a satchel of cloth to collect alms from the other. There were also jingling bells tied round the ankles, for dancing alone with singing was the accomplishment of every Haridasa. The holy group would slowly pace along the streets, rarely entering houses, and voluntary gifts of rice would be pouring in. Other gifts too were made by the devout. These gifts not only suffised for the maintenance of the family of the holy man, but left enough for the feeding of the needy, of casual visitors and of disciples who frequented his lodging.

It was the same daily routine which was followed when he went out of town on his pilgrimages. Shri Purandaradasa survived his Guru (who passed away in 1539 at the ripe age of 92) for twentyfive years, and it may be surmised that his tours and pilgrimages were mostly during this period.

The wonderful influence exerted by the great saint during his lifetime was owing to his dedicated life marked by happy contentment, his attractive teaching through song and dance, and above all the sincerity and power of his utterance. God was a living reality to him, his sole refuge and sustenance ; and he sang the praises of the Lord and exhorted his fellowmen to realise that God was ever present in their hearts, and everywhere, and they could boldly face the struggles of the world with confidence if they had a pure heart and an abiding assurance of God's grace to aid them. The saint's songs are characterised by a directness and vitality that bear the authentic ring of his great spiritual attainments and realisation.

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"When I am absorbed in contemplation of you, what can
vile men ever do to me?"

he says in one of his well-known songs, and proceeds :

"You are looking after me, O Lord ;
what harm can ever befall me from the evil-minded
people of the world ?
My whole being is filled with thoughts of you ;
can ants ever attack a raging fire ?
If a wayward horse is running about and raising a lot of dust,
will that obscure the radiance of the sun ?
What harm can ever befall a man who has
learnt to endure and suffer ?
Can the blowing winds make the hill shake ?"

It was with such robust confidence that Shri Purandaradasa faced the world and its trials and exhorted his hearers to do likewise. Later day itinerant religious preachers who went about the country in our days of decadence have often given expresssion to the sentiment that life is fleeting, nothing more than a short lived bubble, and made a cynical outlook on life somewhat fashionable. "Not so Shri Purandaradasa. He did not permit himself to give utterance to such trite sentiments of indolent *vairagya*. He says in one of his popular songs :

You must swim, abide and win.
You must give up your desire for the vile
pleasures of a worldly life.
You must be like the water floating on the
lotus-leaf, untainted by it.
Or lik the cashew-nut that is on the top of the
fruit instead of being imbedded in it,
You must not suffer like the fish that nibbles at the piece
of flesh on the hook and gets caught.
Do not be caught in the wiles of the world,
but always trust in God."

He draws attention to the distinction of being born as a man in God's creation in another well-known song :

To be born as a man is a precious gift.
Do not throw it away, O foolish ones.

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You have your eyes and limbs and tongue and other organs.
Do not eat mud grovelling in the dust, O mad people.
O perverse beings, drink of the nectar of the name
of the Lord instead of fasting
longing after women and earthly possession."

He sings in another song :

"This is indeed my fortune. contemplating the blessed feet
of the Lord and ever devoted to singing of His glory :
ever intent on the service of His devotees,
this is indeed my good fortune.
You have to be firm like a rock amidst the shifting
tides of the ocean of life ;
And paint like a bow in the company of the wise;
You must please the Lord with soft and patient prayers;
You must be sweet to your kinsmen ;
You must set right your deeds and thoughts by the
help of your reason ;
And when you are with holy men and ascetics, you
must behave like thier darling;
You must swim iike a fish in the ocean of the
philosophy of devotion;
And in thonght, word and deed you must be ever pure."

In exponding religions truths, Shri Purandaradasa made ilberal use of old Hindu legends and puranas, and allusions to Ajamila, Dhruva, Prahlada, Gajendra and others may be found in many of his songs. But of one great hero, Hanuman, however, he was never tired of singing again and again. To Shri Purandaradasa, Hanuman was the ideal embodiment of the noblest and the best, as a devotee, as a jnani and as a man of action. Being a Madhwa, who looks upon the Guru Madhwacharya as the incarnation of Hanuman in this age, Shri Purandaradasa' devotion to Hanuman was but natural. Moreover, Hampi and its environs are looked upon as the old Kishkindha where Hanuman was born and lived in the days of the *Ramayana*. and as Shri Purandaradasa come to live there in his days of religious sadhana his thoughts turned again and again towards this great servant of Shri Rama.

There are numerous songs of Shri Purandaradasa which seem to have been imprompts utterances provoked by some incident or sight witnessed

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by him, but even these are referred to in such a way as to leave a profound impression and uplift the hearer. Thus when a gong is sounded—a daily routine in every religious establishment—the saint comments on it thus :

"Hear ! the gong is going.
And what does the gong say ?
Your life is being spent, and slowly slipping away;
Time is moving on relentlessly;
Bestir yourselves! Think of your deeds;
Think of what you have yet to do."

And when he sees people looking holier than they really are, and putting on false appearances, he is amused and laughs:

I laugh when I see all this show and pretence of holiness;

Or, again, when he sees the religiosity of some people going regularly through their baths and ritualistic observances but devoid of the true spirit, he observes:

All this show of other-worldliness is only a means of filling
up their stomach;
Alas : they are devoid of the slightest trace of devotion
to the Lord;
they have arranged their vessels as in a metal-wareshop
merely to impress others, but they have no genuine devotion.

In one song he addresses a dog which strayed into a kitchen and was beaten. It came whining back:

O curly-tail dog, what did you feed on when you stole
into the kitchen
Did you get your dainties and pastries, Alas !
I show your running out wailing and whining.

This song which is apparently a humourous comment on the dog's painful experiences is an oblique comment on the way many people who dog-like run after tempting things in life but suffer disappointment and pain.

There are, indeed, few situations in life which do not recall some phrase or sentance from the songs of Shri Purandaradasa; and this is the

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reason why they have continued to live in almost every Kannda household for these four centuries.

Just as Shri Purandaradasa fearlessly castigated men's pretentious religiousities and hypocritical behaviour, he condemned in general terms the human lapses which he found round him and exerted his influence to see that higher moral values were recognised by society in his time. Though his observations were not meant for any particular individual, any one among his hearers might wear the cap if it fitted him !

He catalogues in one of his songs, for instence, the different kinds of foolishness in men's behaviour :

"This is the height of foolishness;
To give a loan to a kinsman;
To be a thorn in the side of your fellowmen;
To sell children for your livelihood;
To live in the house where your wife is born;
To fall foul of everybody in the days of your indigence;
To marry in your old age;
To milk a cow whose calf is dead;
To give a loan without proper security;
To abuse your mother;
To be false to those who have fed you;
To get excited about mere hearsay."

The practice of untouchability was much stricter and more widespread in his day than it is in ours. The untouchable classes had their own quarters outside the village, as they still have today in many parts of our country. "Is the uhtouchable only outside the village ? Is there none inside too ?" asks the saint; and proceeds to give a catalogue of traits which mark the untouchable, and which may well apply to a considerable number of people of the higher castes that live inside the village. Mere pride of birth or wealth or position was repugnant to him and in numerous songs we find him censuring it in strong language.

Besides songs which contain sturdy commonsense, and practical wisdom, there are songs in a loftier mood, though expressed in his characteristically simple language :

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"Righteousness will ever win—ever bear this
sacred utterance in yonr mind;
Feed him who has given you poison with dainty dishes;
Protect him who hates you;
Name your son after him who has been false to you."

Which shows his lofty idealism.

The need for associating with good men (satsanga) is a theme which often recurs in his songs :

"Better than drinking milk in the home of a wicked man
is drinking plain water in the house of a good man;
Better than having a nice and merry time with bad people
is associating with good men and be quarrelling with them."

One can go on giving illustrations such antithetical statements and pithy phrases from the wide range of his compositions, for he was a prolific composer and is credited with being the author of 4,75,000 pieces, of which not more than a bare 1200 genuine ones are now extant.

One chief reason why the sayings of Purandaradasa have such a profound and irresistible appeal is because of the simple musical form in which word and sound have blended in a most balanced and harmonious manner. Already noticed, the words are simple, but if they had been just declaimed in prose they would not have carried the same appeal; but intoned with a light casing of melodious music, they appeal both to the head and heart at the same time. The music is there merely to give the necessary stimulus to our emotion, but without for a moment distracting our attention from the idea-content conveyed through the words. Modern enthusiasts devoted to the saint who are also proficient in music are not rendering a service to him by making his words merely pegs on which to hang their elaborate musical embellishments.

The beautiful songs of Shri Purandaradasa describing the baby or boy Krishna have been among our priceless possessions. Some of them have been adopted for Bharatanatya dances. Witness, for instance, the piece, *Krihna Ni begane baro* which enjoys a vogue all over and is a favourite with all exponents of Bharatanatya. These songs on Krishna are sung by ladies, specially on all fastive occasions, making them look upon their own little ones as Shri Krishna Himself. Perhaps in no

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country in the world are little children the objects of such implicit deification as they are in this country; and nothing has helped our mothers to sustain this attitude towards our little ones so much as the popular songs about the Lord Shri Krishna and His boyhood pranks. Shri Purandaradasa has enriched this popular literature with innumerable songs expressive of different moods—of cajolery, of reproof, of tender love, of lullaby etc., These songs have helped to spread sweetness and light in innumerable homes in our country.

The contribution made by Shri Purandaradasa, and other Haridasas who followed in his wake, to enrich the life and thought of South India is truly inestimable. He has been a great teacher of the art of life to our poeple for these four centuries. May his wisdom continue to illumine our lves !

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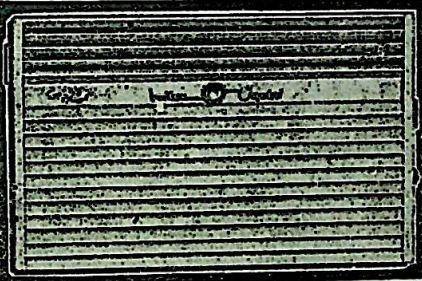

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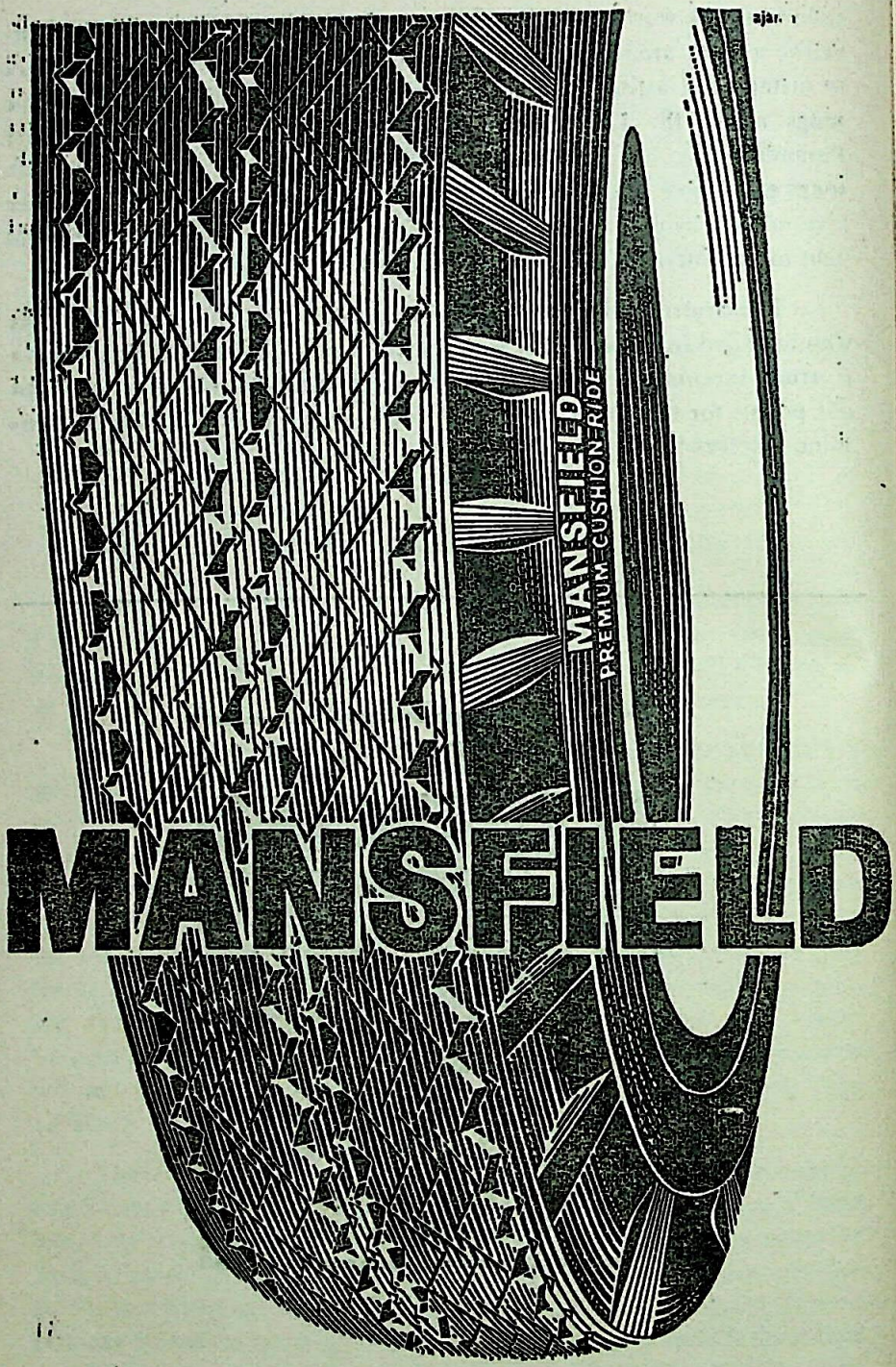

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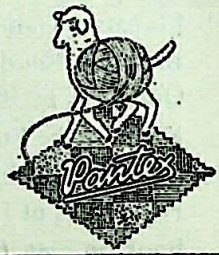

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SHRI PURANDARADASA THE FATHER OF KARNATAKA MUSIC

Sangitha Kalanidhi
Shri T. L. Venkatarama Iyer

This is a day sacred unto the memory of a great saint, who is revered all over the country as the father of Karnataka Music. And that is Purandaradasa, whose four hundredth anniversary we are now celebrating. On the life history of Purandaradasa I need not dwell at any great length. It is well known, and will be the subject of musical discourses during these festivities. I shall therefore be brief in narrating it. Srinivasa Naik—and that was Purandaradasa in his purvasrama, was born in an affluent family carrying on business in precious stones. In his early years he mastered Sanskrit, Kannada, and Music and acquired a good knowledge of our shastras. His mind however was deeply engrossed in amassing wealth and he was so successful in his business that he came to be known as "Navakoti Narayana". But while he was thirty years of age an incident took place which brought about a revolution in his life. A poor Brahmin asked him for financial help for performing his son's Upanayanam. He was putting him off from day to day saying 'let me see to-morrow'. But one day, during his absence, his wife presented the Brahmin with her diamond nose-screw, and he took it to the shop of Purandaradasa for sale. Purandaradasa suspected that it was his wife's and sent a messenger to her to fetch hers. The wife got frightened at the turn, and wanted to take poison. But in the very vessel containing poison, she found her nose-screw and delivered it to the messenger. When Purandaradasa saw both the nose-screws he was amazed at their similarity, and immediately went home and asked his wise what had actually happened. On hearing the facts, the spirit in him was awakened

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and when he next found that the Brahmin who had delivered the jewel to him had disappeared, the realisation came on him that God had revealed Himself it to him to turn him away from material pursuits, and to direct him towards the Divine Light. It was on this occasion that he sang his first song in Atana, "Mosa Hodenallo", in which he exclaimed that he had deceived himself for thirty years by engaging in worldly activities, and forgetting the holy feet of Hari.

The effect of this incident on him was profound. He gave away his properties for charity, and devoted himself to the worship of God. He went to His Holiness Vyasaraya, and became his Sishya and was initiated by him into the Vedanta Sastra, and the cult of Bhakti. It was during this period that he composed his Devaranamas in praise of God. He lived the life of a saint, and made pilgrimages to shrines all over the country, singing the praise of the Gods. His Bhakti expressed itself in all the eleven modes mentioned by Narada in his Bhakti Sutras.

It is therefore not a matter for surprise that Purandaradasa should have come to be regarded as an avatar of Narada himself and this belief Tyagaraja himself shared. So profound was the impression created by his Bhakti, that his own guru, Vyasaraya, said of him that he of all Haridasas was dasa par excellence.

Having touched on the life history of Purandaradasa, we may now turn to his musical heritage, which is what will ensure for him an honoured place in the world of Music for all times to come. In order to appreciate its true worth, it is necessary to remember that Music has both an aesthetic, and an emotional appeal. The music of this country has been evolved on the lines of melody, in contrast to western music which has developed on principles of harmony. The concepts of Ragas, and of Talas are the distinctive features of our music, and the highest form of art music consists in the portrayal Raga forms, and expression of Tala phrases. In this class of Music, the words as such do not posses much value. In Raga alapa there are no words at all, and there are types of compositions in which though the words and their sense have a value but the primary emphasis is on the featuring of Raga and Tala. In contrast to this music in which the appeal is primarily to emotion, and that is to be found in songs which portray the pangs of a lover, or narrate the exploits of a hero, or describe the sufferings of a person. The words of the song evoke, the Sringara rasa in one case the Vira rasa in

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the other, and the Karunarasa in the third. In such cases, music properly harnessed to the song can heighten the emotion which the words might evoke. To do so the music must be simple and direct and not ornate or elaborate. In other words the emphasis is on the words and their sense, and music is merely handmaid to them.

We are now concerned with a class of songs falling within this category called religious music or Bhajans. Bhakti has always occupied an important place in the life of this country. Sages and poets from the Vedic times onwards have stressed the role of Bhakti in enabling us to attain salvation. It is only to be expected therefore that religious songs should have dominated our music at all times. The earliest religious music extant is what is found in the Thevarams and Divya Prabandam in Tamil which date back to the seventh century. These songs are set to Ragas and Talas and are simple in their structure. Each song consists of a number of Charanams, but the melody of all the Charanams is the same.

The stage next to Thevarams is to be found in the Devaranamas of the Dasakoota Composers in the Kannada Language. These are songs in praise of God and consist each of a pallavi and a number of Charanam,s the melody of the Charanams in each song being the same. This class of compositions goes back to the 10th century. That this was the form in vogue all over India during this period could be seen from the Geetha Govinda of Jayadeva. The Ashtapadis are, so far as the structure of the songs is concerned, on the same lines as Devara namas. This was the class of religious music, which was in vogue in the days of Purandaradasa.

Turning next to art music as distinguished from Bhajans, a reading of the Prabandhadhyaya in the several treatises on Music reveals that the traditions of classical Music were being continuously kept up but of the actual prabandhhas belonging to this period, few have survived.

We may now examine the contribution made by Purandaradasa both to art music and Bhajan music. At the present day students of Art music are taught Swaravali, Alankaras, and the like in the Mayamalava Gowla Scale. It is Purandaradasa that adopted this scale for purpose of musical teaching. By way of contrast it may be noted that in Hindustani music the siksha is in the Sankarabharana scale. The question has often been asked why Purandaradasa adopted the Mayamalava Gowla Scale ? One obvious reason might be noted. Most of the Ragas

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sung in the morning are in this scale and as the morning time is the best suited for Siksha it would be eminently appropriate if the scale adopted is one suited to that part of the day. It is for this reason that western writers have referred to the Maya Malava Gowla Scale as the golden thread in the fabric of South Indian Music and this we owe to Purandaradasa. He deserves for this reason alone to be described as the father of Karnataka Music.

Apart from this, Purandaradasa is the author of several technical compositions pertaining to the domain of art music. He wrote a number of Geethams intended to give the students a correct notion of the Raga form. The most famous of them are what are known as Pillayar Geethams with which every student of Karnataka music begins his education. Purandaradasa also wrote a number of Suladis. These are compositions intended to inculcate knowledge both of Ragas and of the sapta Talas. Sometimes the raga is the same but the talas are varied. Sometimes the tala and raga are both changed presenting a sort of raga-tala-malika. Many of the suladis have been lost, but a few of them have been preserved in the work of the greatest of the modern musicologists Subbarama Dikshitar, in his Sangeethasampradaya Pradarsini.

Turning next to the Devaranamas, of Purandaradas he himself states in the song 'Vasudevana Namavaliya" in Mukhari Raga that he had composed four lakhs and seventy five thousands of them. This by itself is an astonishing record without any parallel, and the astonishment becomes all the greater when the quality of the songs is examined. The purpose of the Devaranamas is, it should be remembered, to inculcate Bhakti in the minds of the listeners. To achieve that purpose Purandaradasa uses simple language homely sayings and proverbs such as would impress all persons. Purandaradasa was steeped in the Upanishads and in the Puranas. He expresses the great truths enshrined therein in simple language such as could be understood even by lay men and he further reinforces those truths by references to puranic stories and incidents. The didactic value of these compositions therefore is immense.

Coming to the Devaranamas, they are simple and set to popular melodies and make a direct appeal to the listeners. The number of ragas handled by him is about fifty, but they are all rakti ragas suited to inspire Bhakti. Rare and difficult ragas might have a place in aesthetic

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Music but in devotional music it is the simple and popular tunes that tell.

There can be no doubt that the Devaranamas of Purandaradasa exerted a deep influence on Tyagaraja as can be seen in his Divyanama and other devotional kirthanas. In weaving the truths of the upanishads and puranic stories in his compositions, he had clearly Purandaradasa as his model. The influence of Purandaradasa on Muthuswamy Dikshitar was equally profound. The suladis, such as we have, been preserved in his family and the navagraha Kirthanas set to different ragas and in the sapta Talas would appear to have been inspired by them. Muthuswamy Dikshitar jealously preserved the tradions of Purandaradasa even in Raga lakshanas, and has composed krithis in Ragas like Suddha Saveri and Devagandhara in accordance with those traditions. Indeed a research into the authentic melodies of Purandaradasa must help in resolving many a tangle pertaining to theories in Ragalakshana at the present day.

Thus wheather we have regard to his Devara namas or to his geethas and suladis, Purandaradasa easily ranks amongst the greatest of our composers and in adopting Maya Malava Gowla as the Scale for Musical education he has revolutionised music in South India.

So on this the 400th Anniversary of Purandaaradasa let us with reverence and with gratitude pay our homage to a Saint who has purified and elevated society through his music.

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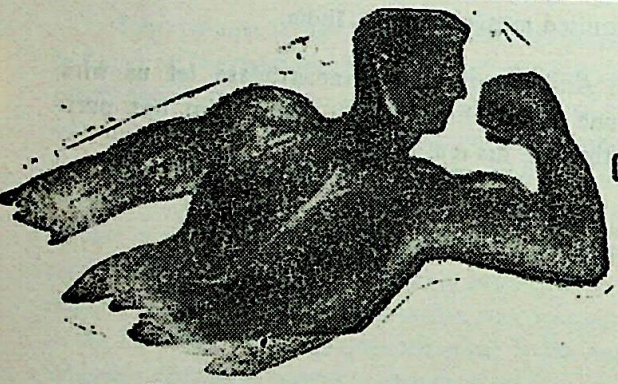

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THE TAMBURA AND THE CHIPLA

Prof. V. V. Sadagopan

There is a naive assumption, among some people, that the best music is that which appeals to the few, (the classes, as they are called) and to them only. At the other extreme is the view that what appeals to the many (the masses, as they are called) should be considered the best.

Let us examine these views. Music, by general agreement, is a universal language. This concept of music as a universal language has been there in all climes and times, because it is the language of feeling, and employs inarticulate sounds instead of words. Emotion is the external manifestation of feeling. Aesthetic delight, called *rasa* in Indian aesthetics, is its inward expression. Music as an art concerns itself with transmitting feeling into aesthetic perception. It is here that the role of the artist comes in. With the aid of *lakshya* (which is the counterpart of what literature is to verbal language) and training in techniques, handed down from earlier masters, the artist is expected to rise to a level of aesthetic feeling and thinking. This faculty is referred to as intuition. It is from intuitive experience that art springs forth.

Because feeling is fundamental in human nature, that music which uses sound aesthetic principles is bound to have an appeal, at least in some measure, to all human beings, not to speak of other creatures. Progressing upward, from this level of fundamental or elemental appeal, there are different levels of *understanding*, of course. It is but natural that at the top level of understanding the number of persons participat-

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ing will be small, but the base of the pyramid should comprise humanity as a whole, as far as possible. I say, "as far as possible", because human beings in all parts of the world have their Individual and group inhibitions which offer mental resistance to anything that comes to them from outside. All the same, if we consider the fundamental elements which go to make for Art, it will be clear that is great art which appeals to the few and the many at the same time.

This is overwhelmingly demonstrated by Purandaradasa whom we venerate as the Father of Karnataka music. Even as today, there would appear to have been in his time cliques and coteries who swore by their particular brands of music. Purandaradasa, the servant of God, was a thinking and feeling soul. He saw through the emptiness of the claims made for arbitrary music disguised as art music. Art at its best, in our country, has never limited itself to entertainment but has always meant a spirituo-aesthetic experience which ennobles man. Purandaradasa gave to the world such great music that the king, the saint and the commoner were all moved by it. The great king, Krishnadeva Raya, revered him; the towering saint and scholar, Vyasaraya, who gave initiation to Purandaradasa, extolled him; and the common people gathered round him in the hundreds and thousands and listened to him in rapturous attention, participating in group-singing to the extent they were capable of.

That, I think, is an ideal worthy of pursuit by musicians—to be true to God who is *Nadabrahma* and to practice *Nadopasana*. Tyagaraja, who modelled himself completely on Purandaradasa and enriched the heritage of Karnataka music left by the great Father, develops the philosophy of *Nadabrahma* in great detail in many of his songs. His was not dry dialectic philosophy but a way of life which he lived and exemplified for the sake of posterity. He acknowledges his indebtedness to Purandaradasa in the introductory verses of his Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam. Says he :

"I meditate on the great qualities of Purandaradasa who sheds eternal lustre by his life of aesthetic singing in praise of the auspicious attributes of God, the dispeller of sin and sorrow."

What are ingredients of good music ? Let Purandaradasa himself speak :

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Taala beku, takka mela beku—saanta
Vele beku, gaana kelabekembuvarige;
Yatipraasavirabeku, gatige nillisabeku,
Ratipatipitanolu atipremavirabeku;
Galasuddhavirabeku, tilidu pelalubeku,
Kalavala bidabeku, kalemukhavirabeku;
Aritavrirabeku, harusha heccalubeku,
Purandaravithalane Paradaivavenabeku.

"*Tala* should be there, *mela* should be there; and peace must reign where people wish to listen to music. *Yati* and *Prasa* should be there; the gait of the song should be maintained, and one should have extreme love for the Lord. The voice should be flawless and what is sung should be understood; there should be no hurry or nervousness, and the face should be pleasant. There should be men of taste, and there should be joy; and one should think of Purandara Vithala, the *Paradaiva*."

And what is the use to which music should be put? Purandaradasa has no hesitation in saying that it should be *Bhakti* or *Bhagavatprema*:

Kelano Hari taalano
Taalamelagaliddu premavillada gana

"Hari will not listen to—he will not bear to hear—that music which is bereft of devotion, however well-dressed with accompaniments it might be."

The same sentiment is expressed in some of Tygaraja's songs, the following in particular:

Sangeeta jnaanamu bhaktivina
Sanmaargamu galade.

"Music devoid of devotion is not the right path." And he indicates how accompaniments should (rather should not) be played:

Maddala taala gatulu teliyakane
mardinchuta sukhama?

"Is it conducive to joy—to *bang* on *maddalas* without understanding the gaits of tala?"

It should be played "*Sogasuga*" (with finesse), as he says in another song.

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Raga means love, and there can be no greater love than Divine Love—love of the Infinite good qualities embodied in God. Along this path there is no disappointment, no frustration, no looking back. Thus it is that when raga, which is the very soul of our music, is employed in the direction of *Bhagavatprema* that it finds its fulfilment. The spark of Divine Love which abides in every human being is lit by the *Nadopasaka* who sings the glories of the Lord when he uses verbal language at all. Further, the verbal sentiment serves as an aid for the singer to apprehend the appropriate musical sentiment. This in turn gives rise to enrichment of verbal sentimene, and thus the process goes on in what I would call a virtuous cycle. At this level of musical experience there is no place for snobbery or highbrowism which generally goes with arbitrary music, misnamed 'sophisticated' music. Here, a good voice is not at discount. On the other hand, it is held in high premium as would be evident from the term *galasuddha*—used by Purandaradasa in the song quoted above. There is no place either for noise or other forms of misbehaviour on the part of the audience, and this is emphasised by Purandaradasa. Nor is there any justification for aggressive purcussion which violates the fundamental aspects of tala. Both Purandaradasa and Tyagaraja condemn this unequivocally.

Possibly there were songs by Purandaradasa which have been lost to us and in which he expatiated on the aspect of *galasuddhi*, but from Tyagaraja we get details regarding voice culture :

Niddura niraakarinchi
Mudduga tambura batti
Suddhamaina manasuche susvaramuto.....

"Casting off sleep, holding the beautiful (well-tuned) tambura, and pure at heart, singing tuneful svaras...."

'Suddhamaina manasu" indicates also that the mind of the singer should be peaceful and attuned to his tambura sruti. It is the mind which is the actual singer and the agency it employs is the breathing system acting on the muscles of the voice-box called the larynx. The breath should always proceed from the *Nabhi*, deep down the diaphragm, fill the lungs and act on the muscles of the vocal chords, *Rasana*, i.e. the tongue, and *Naasa*, the nose, come into use only for the purpose of pronouncing letters and manipulating the overtones of svaras.

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That, I think, is the meaning of the phrase "naabhi-hrit-kantha rasana-naasaadulayandu", used by Tyagaraja in the song, 'Sobhillu Saptasvara'. Time and again, he has stressed the need for the sound to emanate from the *Naabhi*. That svara is *su-svara* which finds its appropriate place in the context of the *bhava* of the particular raga and is produced by a continuous jet of air from the *naabhi*.

If Raga is the soul of our music, Tala is the body. It is no use priding onrselves that we have hundreds of talas, so long as no attempt is made to recapture the essential spirit of tala, which is 'Sarvalaghu shuddha or laya shuddha." Each tala is made up of a particular number of units of time, and it is necessary to keep this unit uniform and smooth. The elements of beauty in tala are "sama, ateeta and anaagata," which terms respectively mean that the significant svara or akshara of a melodic phrase falls on the beat, a little before it, or a little after. "Laya-prastaras which violate either the fundamental principle of uniformity and smoothness of the unit of time or the artistic principles of "sama, ateeta and anaagata are, to say the least, unsound. The tendency for people to become conditioned to inartistic induldgence in an acrobatical and exhibitionist techniques in "laya-prastara is to be deplored.

The aggressive spirit which generally characterises the present-day *layaprastana* and the undesirable effect it has on melody are very much the result of ignorance and the fear born out of it. To conquer the forces of ignorance and fear, we must turn to the masters who gave us our music—to Purandaradasa and Tyagaraja in particular.. Their insistence on *sruti* and *laya* would be evident from their holding the *tambura* in one hand and tne *chipla* on the other. The *chipla* is not to be dismissed as a *Bhajana* instrument, nor are Bhajana and concert to be divorced from each other. One should be proud and happy to wield the *chipla*, the instrument handled by Purandaradasa and Tyagaraja. The student will find that it gives him an uncommon insight into the nature of laya (which is the soul of Tala) and helps him to attain mastery over it. This way, I think, lies hope for Karnataka music.

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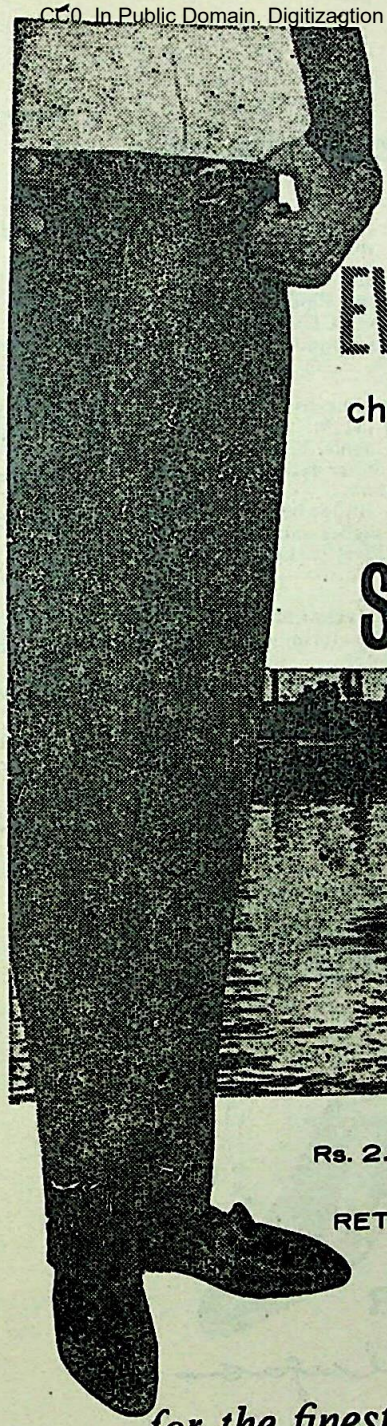

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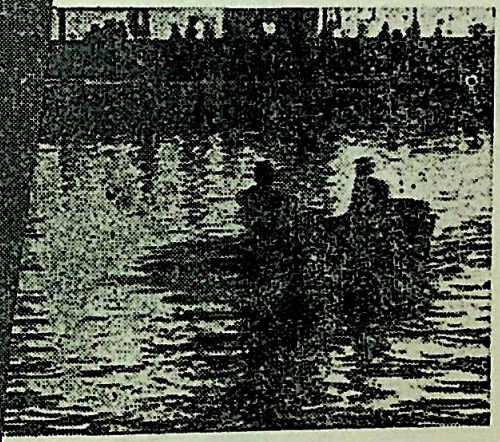

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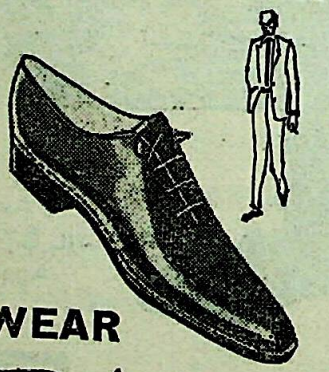

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